

## ***We see me* presenting an OT account of partially co-referential clitics**

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This presentation describes a known though under-researched gradience in acceptability in partially co-referent subject-object relationships, such as the ones illustrated in (1). Different authors have proposed several approaches that differ in terms of the predictions they make regarding the acceptability of this type of constructions (Cysouw & Fernández, 2012; Hampe & Lehmann, 2013; García Calvo, 1974; Rooryck, 2006). Crucially, Muller (1985) disagrees with Gross (1969) in terms of how 1b and 1c should be ordered.

- (1) a. Je nous vois.            Nos veo.            Ens veig. (French /Spanish/ Catalan)  
       ‘I see us.’  
    ? b. Nous me voyons.        Me vemos.            Em veiem.  
       ‘We see me.’  
   ?\* c. Tu vous vois.            Os ves.            Us veus.  
       ‘You see you guys.’  
   \*\* d. Vous te voyez.            Te veis.            Et veieu.  
       ‘You guys see you.’

These variable judgments are confirmed by the results of our Acceptability Judgment Task (AJT) ( $N=40$ ) in Italian, French, Spanish, and Catalan: there is wide acceptance of the (1)a forms and wide rejection of (1)d, while judgements for (1)bc are intermediate and variable. In order to account for the gradience in acceptability of the sentences in (1) and the variability of sentence types (1bc), we turn to Variable Optimality Theory (Nagy & Reynolds, 1997; Anttila, 1997). We propose 3 constraints that allow us to model the interaction of 3 domains: \*InclObj (morphosyntax), \*ReflSym (semantics), and \*2Add (pragmatics).

The constraint \*InclObj prohibits clitic constructions where (singular) objects are a subset of (plural) subjects. Pragmatically, \*2Add reflects the incompatibility of addressing a 2p.sg addressee and a 2p.pl addressee in the same clause. \*ReflSym requires truly reflexive and reciprocal constructions to be symmetrical i.e. the subject and the object to be exactly the same. This constraint is undominated in (2), thus categorically ruling out partial coreference for inherently reflexive verbs (*\*je nous évanouis*, *\*nos desmayo* ‘I faint us’), as well as for reciprocals (*\*je nous embrasse*, *\*nos abrazo* ‘I hug us’), regardless of the persons involved. While the \*ReflSym constraint is undominated, Variable Optimality Theory allows us to crucially unrank the \*2Add and \*InclObj constraints, reflecting native speakers' variable judgements for (1)bc (or 2bc below).

(2)		*ReflSym	*InclObj	*2Add
a.	Je nous vois. ‘I see us.’			
b.	Nous me voyons. ‘We see me.’		*	
c.	Tu vous vois. ‘You see you guys.’			*
d.	Vous te voyez. ‘You guys see you.’		*	*

We agree with Cysouw & Fernández Landaluze (2012:772) that "something special" characterizes partially coreferent clitic constructions, but unlike previous accounts of this

phenomenon, we find constraint interaction a better fit as the facts cannot be attributed to frequency effects (Hampe & Lehmann, 2013).

### References

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